

“Soft” Market Solutions May Not Require Large Advertising Budgets

By Susan Manning, Secretary/Treasurer, SLAA Board of Directors

The days when there were more qualified applicants than available apartments seem to be over. Most of us are finding that in order to fill our apartments we must be more creative and spend more money advertising. We are offering incentives such as move in specials, reduced or no security deposit, permanent or temporary lowering of rent, coupons for grocery stores, washers and dryers, shorter term leases than we like and the list goes on and on. Apartment managers and owners are a very resourceful group.

There may, however, be an important opportunity and market that we have overlooked because we don't know enough about Section 8 Rental Assistance. The owner/agent, applicant, and housing authority must all understand the program and work together for the move in and continued occupancy to run smoothly. HUD has awarded additional vouchers to the Housing Authorities in our area. **The Housing Authority of Salt Lake City will be holding tenant orientation meetings on March 1st and 2nd which will send approximately 300 families searching for safe, decent, sanitary, affordable housing.** Because of the unusually high number of vouchers available at this time, everyone on the waiting list qualifying for one of these vouchers will be given the same 60 day opportunity to find adequate housing. Housing assistance during this time period will be awarded on a first come first serve basis. Families unable to deliver a completed “Request for Lease Approval” from a landlord wishing to rent to them will be placed back on the waiting list. Housing Vouchers are issued all year but not at this rate.

Since we will be greeting and processing more housing assistance applicants than we have ever seen before, it's very important that both parties be well educated in what to expect and the most expedient process to be taken. The Salt Lake Apartment association is happy to sponsor this forum where owners, managers, leasing agents, housing authority Section 8 experts and other interested parties may come together.

The Housing Authority does no screening for tenancy. They issue a voucher for rental assistance based on third party verification of income and copies of documents provided by the family to verify other eligibility criteria. **The Landlord must perform the same background checks that they do for all other applicants based upon their policies in place at time of application.**

There is a great deal to learn with housing assistance programs and rental markets are changing all the time. You will not waste your time by attending this unique gathering on February 24th as a participant with questions and concerns or just networking with other professionals in your industry while enjoying lunch. Please remember to call Jane so we will know how many lunches we will need to have provided.